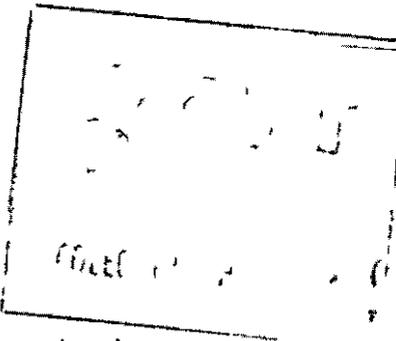




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POLICIES - THEIR IMPACT ON THE SEED PROGRAM

Governmental policies at a national, province or state level can make the difference between success or failure of a seed program. Leaders in seed programs often recognize the importance of clear policies. However, it frequently is difficult to determine which policies are most important, to get decisions made and to continue to pursue the same policies long enough to achieve successful results.

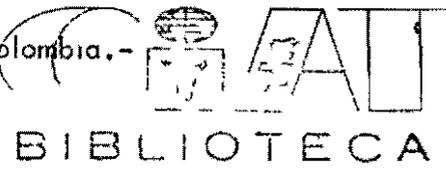
Frequently, the day to day needs are so great that time is not taken to consider the long-term impact of decisions made to meet short-term problems. As seed programs move from the early stage of development (stage 1) to a more comprehensive program (stage 4), the importance of clear, consistent policies becomes increasingly significant. Therefore, leaders of a total program or of the individual components of a program, must take the time to develop policies that can assure successful results. What are these policies?

Policies That Are Important

A Seeds in the Agricultural Development Strategy

A basic policy that affects all others is the relative importance to be given to seed in the overall agricultural development strategy. When the decision is firmly made that adequate supplies of good quality seed of improved varieties are one of the pillars on

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which agricultural development rests, many other policy decisions can be made more easily. The leadership in more and more countries have made this decision and are now ready to consider what kind of supporting policy decisions are needed to move ahead. These policies start with crop research activities.

B. Policies in Crop Research that Affect Seed

Decisions made in public crop research programs can have a far reaching impact on seed supplies to farmers. Among the policy decisions that are most important are those that

1. Establish the strategy for research on individual crops including the relative importance of breeding versus only testing for each crop.
- ✓ 2. State the role to be played by commercial trade channels in introducing and developing new varieties and crops.
- ✓ 3. Specific^y the manner of organizing the crop breeding program and the level of financial support to be provided.
4. Indicate the nature and extent of cooperation with regional and international research efforts.
- ✓ 5. Specify whether to encourage or discourage plant breeding activities by private seed enterprises.
- 6. Clarify at what stage and under what conditions germplasm is to be exchanged with public and private plant breeders.
- 7. State whether or not breeding stock can be imported by private seed enterprises for testing or multiplication.
8. Establish the responsible for testing new varieties and specify the kinds of testing needed.

- 9 Outline the use to be made of test results
- 10 Determine if a " variety review and release committee " is to be established, specify its mandate and constitution
- ✓11 State if private plant breeding research is being encouraged, clarify the relation of these activities to " official " testing and public plant breeding
12. Outline the nature of agreements with neighboring countries if varieties are to be jointly named, released, and seed stock maintained
- 13 Indicate to what extent farmers are to be free to choose the varieties they want and how much information is to be supplied to them

C Policies Connected with the Initial Seed Increases

After new varieties and hybrids have been developed through crop research the seed multiplication process starts Policies at this stage that have an impact on the rest of seed program are those that

- 1 Project how much seed of a new variety needs to be multiplied by public research institutions in order to have enough seed for distribution to others.
- 2 Establish the organizational pattern to be used by the crop research programs to maintain and multiply varieties
- ✓ 3 Determine if a separate Basic Seed enterprise is to be formed and clarify the role and limits of its responsibility

4. Indicate whether this activity is to be partially or totally self-sufficient.
- ✓ 5. Specify the use and allocation of Basic Seed or its equivalent to farmers, seed growers, seed enterprises or public sector farms with respect to different crops

D Policies Affecting Certified and Commercial Seed Supplies

Although many of the policies just covered affect certified and commercial seed supplies, some policies have a direct affect upon the development of seed enterprises. Some of these policies are those that

- ✓ 1 Clarify whether seed importation is to be encourage or discouraged, the crops involved, and the restrictions, if any, that are to be applied.
- ✓ 2 State whether local seed production is or is not to be encouraged
- 3 Indicate if seed enterprises are to be formed and the manner in which this is to be done, including whether private investment is to be stimulated
- ✓ 4 Specify the kind of assistance that can be provided to stimulate the formation of seed enterprises and to hasten their growth.
- ✓ 5 State the nature and amount of involvement expected by foreign seed enterprises.

E Policies with an Impact on Seed Quality.

Farmers want good q uality seed and most seed suppliers are also interested in delivering seed of good quality Governments too can have an impact on seed quality

through policies that

- 1 Focus on the level of emphasis that is to be placed on seed quality both inside and outside government activities
- ✓ 2 Outline the broad approach for checking quality on seed distributed from local production and from imported sources
- ✓ 3 State whether seed certification is to be initiated, the manner of organization, and how a practical level of standards is to be established
- ✓ 4 Indicate the kind of legislation needed, the details to be included, when it should be enacted, and how it is to be enforced
- 5 Outline the number, size and location of seed testing laboratories needed
6. Specify the organizational structure and linkages needed for all quality control activities supported by government.

F Policies that Relate to Seed Use .

Getting seed used involves education and information as well as marketing

Major policy decisions related to seed use are those that

- ✓ 1 Specify the kind and intensity of educational and information programs and campaigns to get more seed of improved varieties used
- ✓ 2 Outline the measures required to develop good linkages among research, extension, and seed groups
- ✓ 3 Define clearly the role to be played by seed enterprises and other groups in the marketing of seeds.

- ✓ 4 State the kind of assistance available to marketing groups to stimulate their formation and growth
- ✓ 5 State the role of government in projecting seed needs and in determining the actual demand for seeds
- ✓ 6 Clarify the linkages desired in the marketing of other agricultural supplies with seed and the availability of credit for the entire system
- ✓ 7. Indicate whether seed prices shall reflect all costs of production plus a profit to the seed enterprises and marketing groups or be controlled, and/or perhaps subsidized
- 8. State the kind of plans to be developed and procedures to be followed to meet emergency seed supply needs

G Policies that Affect Personnel Development and Training

Seed programs cannot develop without personnel who are well training and committed to whatever aspect of the program with which they are involved. If the seed program does have the proper priority in the development strategy, it is necessary to have policies that

- 1. Specify that the level of commitment to the seed program is to be adequately reflected in committing personnel to the program
- ✓ 2 Assure that the seed technologist is properly identified with a role in the total scheme for development
- 3 Specify that personnel management procedures are to contribute to staff morale, motivation, and effectiveness



4. State that funds and personnel are to be sufficiently committed to training.

✓ 5 Assure that trained personnel are properly utilized

H Policies that Assure Adequate Resources

Physical, financial, external resources as well as human resources must be committed to the seed program if it is to succeed. Again policies are needed that

1. State that the allocation of physical, human, financial, and external resources is to reflect the priority placed on seed

2. Clarify that the investments in equipment are to be made in a systematic way with an emphasis on what is needed to assure good seed quality not just the least expensive or most sophisticated machine

✓ 3. Emphasize the importance of equipment maintenance and assure that this is reflected in the long, continued use of machines

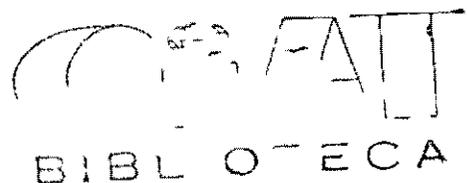
✓ 4. State that credit policies are to favor seed enterprises and marketing groups

✓ 5. Clarify how funds are to be available when needed in all seed operations

6. Outline the position regarding external assistance to support the development of the seed program

Getting the Decisions Made

Recognizing that many policies do affect the direction a seed program takes,



it is essential that special attention be focused on " getting the necessary decisions made " To do this requires time and some special attention to be sure that those concerned and affected are involved in formulating policies

A " seed review team " which can assess a seed program and initiate recommendations on steps needed to strengthen a seed program can be useful in identifying and resolving policy questions within a country Such a team's recommendations should be useful in framing policies that can have a positive effect on the program If a "National Seed Board " exists, it should concentrate on evolving policies or proposals for policies that will be beneficial to the total seed program

Within each component of seed program leaders can also have a beneficial impact on policies related to their specific activity For example, plant breeders and agronomists in crop research programs often have opportunities to frame or influence policies related to their programs including those affecting Breeder and Basic Seed Managers and leaders in seed enterprises determine policies within their own organizations and often have opportunities individually to affect national policies Through a seed association or by participating on a National Seed Board they can also affect policies

The main point to remember is that policies affecting seed programs are developed by people People involved in the programs are normally in the best position to help evolve clear, constructive policies

Continuity of Policies

Many programs suffer from a lack of continuity in their seed policies. Sometimes this is caused by changes in government, but more frequently it results from changes in personnel and no structure to assure continuity of policies. One of the main advantages of a National Seed Board, if it is properly used, is that it provides a structure through which greater continuity of policies can be achieved. Special long-term seed development efforts based upon a well conceived plan that has high governmental support can help assure continuity. Seed legislation, if carefully drafted, can provide continuity of policies related to various aspects of the program such as seed certification or seed marketing quality control. Each country needs to examine the kinds of steps it needs to take to provide as much continuity in its policies as possible.

Conclusion

Policies should not be inflexible, neither should they be chameleous. Programs falter and personnel become frustrated when clear policies are not developed or are not followed. One of the most essential needs in seed programs is to identify those policies that are important today, decide what course is to be followed and continue to pursue the policies decided upon until the desired results are achieved or it is clear that conditions justify a change. Good policies properly implemented can result in stronger seed programs.